

cations. Besides the Internal evidence  
 afforded by  
 difference of style, the hymns, not  
 ^infrequently, avow a  
 difference of date; and we find some  
 ascribed to *ancient*  
*jRishis*, while others admit their being of  
*new* or *neivest*  
 composition. The great variety of  
 metres employed  
 shows, also, a progressive development of  
 the powers  
 of the language, which could have been the  
 effect only  
 of long and diligent cultivation. There  
 can be little  
 doubt, therefore, that they range through  
 a consider-  
 able interval; although, as far as respects  
 their general  
 purport, they belong to the same  
 condition of belief,  
 and to a period during which no change  
 of any im-  
 portance took place in the national creed.  
 The same  
 divinities are worshipped in a similar  
 strain, and, with  
 one\* or two doubtful exceptions,—which  
 are, possibly,  
 interpolations, or which may admit of  
 explanation,—  
 offer nothing that is contradictory or  
 incongruous.  
 This is the more remarkable, as there  
 can be little  
 doubt that the hymns were taught,  
 originally, orally,  
 and that the knowledge of them was  
 perpetuated by  
 the same mode of tuition. This is  
 sufficiently ap-  
 parent from their construction: they  
 abound with  
 elliptical phrases; with general epithets,

of which the  
application is far from, obvious, until  
explained; with  
brief comparisons, which cannot be  
appreciated with-  
out such additional details as a living  
teacher might  
be expected to supply; and with all those  
blanks and.  
deficiencies which render the written  
text of the  
*Vedas* still unintelligible, in many  
passages, without  
the assistance of the Scholiast, and which  
he is alone  
enabled to fill up by the greater or less  
fidelity with